

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: POST EDITORIAL ON CW

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EDITORIAL IN WASHINGTON POST
AUGUST 1 ENTITLED, "MUST WE WAGE CHEMICAL WAR?"

1. IN VOTES TODAY AND NEXT TUESDAY, THE HOUSE MUST DECIDE WHETHER TO PLUNGE AHEAD WITH A PROGRAM THAT MAY KEEP THE US READY TO WAGE CHEMICAL WARFARE FOR YEARS TO COME, OR WHETHER TO PAUSE AND STUDY THIS ESPECIALLY DREAD FORM OF WARFARE MORE THOROUGHLY AND EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO LIMIT OR EVEN BAN IT ON AN INTERNATIONAL BASIS. SPECIFICALLY, THE PROGRAM AT ISSUE INVOLVES 5.8 MILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR (AS MUCH AS TWO BILLION DOLLARS LATER) TO START PRODUCING A "BINARY" CHEMICAL WEAPON, A NEW SAFER-TO-HANDLE METHOD FOR DELIVERING NERVE GAS. GENERALLY, THE PROGRAM POSES TO CONGRESS PERHAPS ITS FIRST GOOD OPPORTUNITY--AND IF MISSED, ITS LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR A LONG TIME--TO BREAK THE MONOPOLY WHICH SPECIAL INTERESTS IN THE PENTAGON HAVE MAINTAINED FOR A FULL GENERATION OVER THE NATION'S POLICIES ON CW.

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2. THE KEY FACTS ON BINARIES WERE BROUGHT OUT LAST

SPRING IN HEARINGS OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. THE US HAS HUGE STOCKPILES OF DEADLY NERVE GAS SO, AS REP DONALD FRASER (D-MINN.) RECENTLY PUT IT, "WE ARE NOT EXAMINING THIS PROBLEM FROM A POSITION OF WEAKNESS." THE SMALL CW LOBBY WITHIN THE PENTAGON PROFESSES TO SEE A LOOMING SOVIET OFFENSIVE CW THREAT. BUT, IN FACT, AMERICAN MILITARY COMMANDERS APPARENTLY DISAGREEING WITH THIS ESTIMATE, HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO PREPARE TO DEFEND AGAINST IT. AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, WHILE ASKING FOR FUNDS TO START PROCURING BINARIES, CONCEDE THAT FULL PRELIMINARY OPEN-AIR TESTING HAS NOT BEEN CONDUCTED. THAT IS, THE US HAS ON HAND ENOUGH NERVE GAS TO KILL EVERY PERSON IN THE WORLD SEVERAL TIMES OVER. ITS MILITARY POSTURE REFLECTS A JUDGMENT THAT THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT INTEND A CW ATTACK. AND IT HAS NOT COMPLETED TESTS ON THE NEW BINARIES IT WISHES NOW TO PROCURE.

3. IF THE MILITARY REASONS FOR DELAY ON BINARIES ARE STRONG, THE DIPLOMATIC REASONS ARE MORE SO. DISCUSSIONS ON CONTROLLING CHEMICAL WEAPONS--PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING, USE--HAVE BEEN CHUGGING ALONG AT GENEVA FOR YEARS. THEY WERE GIVEN A HEALTHY PUSH AT THE MOSCOW SUMMIT JUST A MONTH AGO WHEN NIXON AND BREZHNEV AGREED TO SEEK "EARLY PROGRESS" ON AN AGREEMENT "DEALING WITH THE MOST DANGEROUS, LETHAL MEANS OF CHEMICAL WARFARE." THIS MEANS NERVE GAS IF IT MEANS ANYTHING. THE ADMINISTRATION'S ARMS CONTROL DIRECTOR FRED C. IKLE HAS REPEATEDLY WARNED CONGRESS THAT PRODUCTION OF BINARIES WOULD UNDERMINE EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE INTERNATIONAL CW CONTROLS. INDEED, TO LAUNCH A MASSIVE NEW CW PROGRAM NOW IS TO MAKE A MOCKERY OF NIXON'S SUMMIT PLEDGE, ITSELF SPECIFICALLY REAFFIRMED SINCE THEN BY HIS AMBASSADOR AT GENEVA. THAT BINARY FUNDS SHOULD BE SOUGHT AT ALL, AFTER THAT SUMMIT PLEDGE, IS A PERVERSE TRIBUTE TO THE WAY BUREAUCRATIC MOMENTUM CAN SUBSTITUTE FOR POLICY AT THE PENTAGON. CAREFUL STUDENTS OF ARMS CONTROL MAKE THE FURTHER POINT THAT BINARIES, BEING RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE AND SIMPLE TO MAKE, POSSESS AN ALL TOO SCARY POTENTIAL FOR GETTING INTO THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS OR OF COUNTRIES LOOKING FOR A HOT WEAPON ON THE CHEAP.

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4. THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE IS TO VOTE TODAY ON THE BINARY MONEY. SINCE REP GEORGE H. MAHON (D-TEX.), THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, ALSO CHAIRS ITS DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE, WHICH HAS ALREADY APPROVED THE MONEY, PERHAPS THE BEST THAT CAN BE HOPED FOR IN THE COMMITTEE IS FOR IT TO ADD LANGUAGE SOMEHOW HINGING THE APPROPRIATION TO

CW NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA. CERTAINLY THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR SPOILING THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, EVEN BEFORE THE PROMISED NIXON-BREZHNEV INITIATIVE IS TAKEN, BY CHARGING AHEAD ON BINARIES. AT ANY RATE, THE FULL HOUSE IS DUE TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION NEXT TUESDAY. SOME 50 OR MORE LEGISLATORS HAVE ALREADY APPROVED A USEFUL RESOLUTION BY REP WAYNE OWENS (D-UTAH) URGING MOVEMENT ON BOTH THE BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AND CHEMICAL WARFARE FRONTS. SO THERE IS A BETTER CHANCE TO GAIN CONTROL OF BINARIES ON THE HOUSE FLOOR. IT IS A FIGHT WELL WORTH MAKING". KISSINGER

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